PINK FLOYD

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

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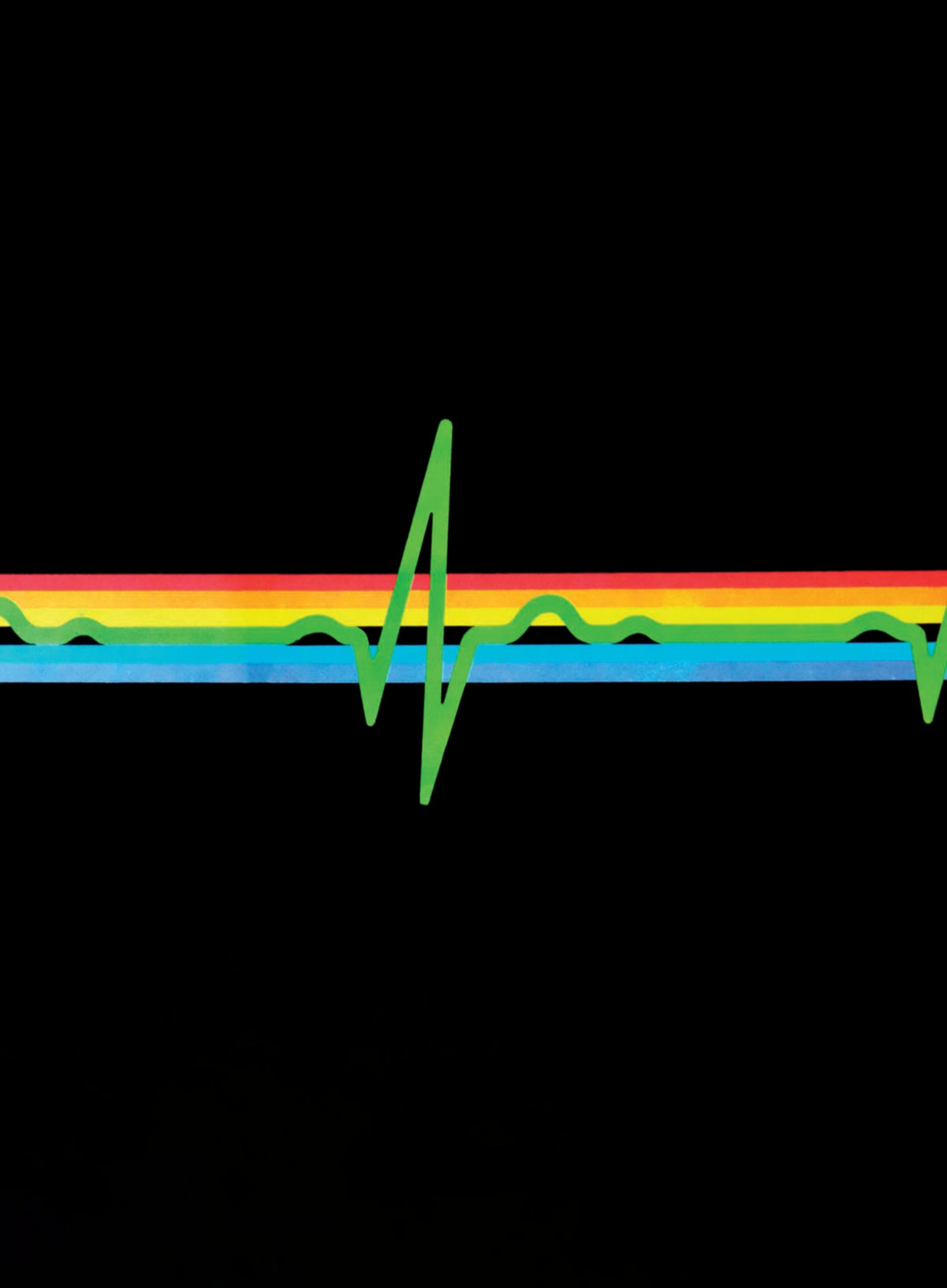

PINK

FLOYD

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INTRODUCTION

SPEAK TO ME

WHY I LOVE *DARK SIDE*

BY JOHN ROLFE

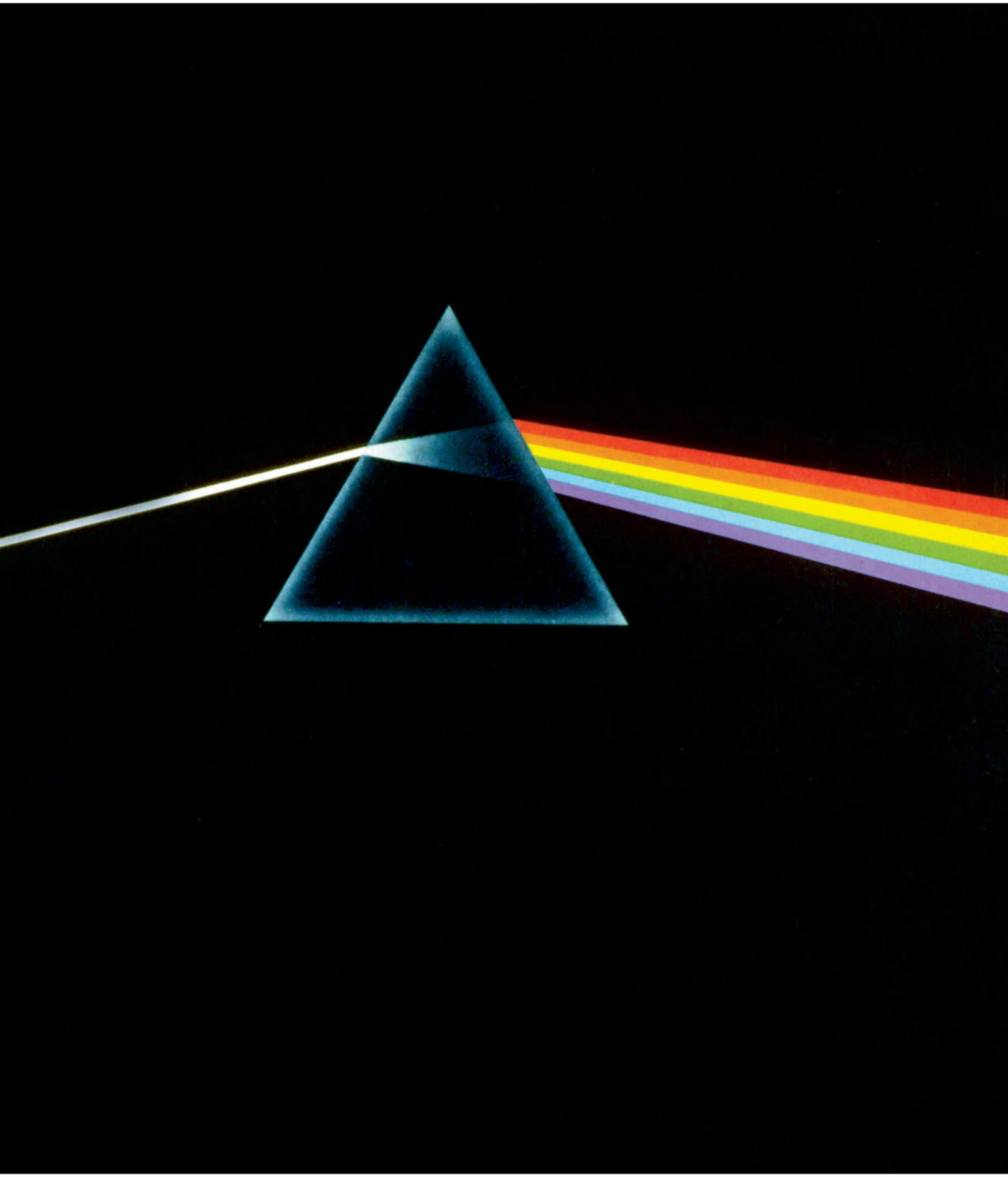
A truly great record can create a lasting memory of when you first heard it. Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* did that for me.

I still vividly recall batting a balloon around my friend's living room when the song "Breathe" came on the radio. It was March 1973. I was 15 years old and captivated by the opening heartbeat, voices, laughter and screams that led into a burst of enchanting music that floated like the balloon. There was a compelling magic in "Breathe" that remains as strong for me now as it did then. I barely knew Pink Floyd at the time, but I immediately loved their then-new album. Each song was brilliant and flowed seamlessly into a whole that has continued to, well, speak to me.

The pressures of life, alienation, greed, violence and death are grim subject matter for sure, but *Dark Side* is hardly a depressing drag. It's an extraordinary, thought-provoking and often thrilling experience thanks to the magic of the music, the immaculate production and the humanity of the lyrics by Roger Waters.

Fifty years later, *The Dark Side of the Moon* remains one of the most popular, revered and examined rock albums of all time. It's certainly the most thoughtful, sonically creative musical statement on the human condition that I've ever heard. It says what I feel about life and a troubled world. It always genuinely moves me, particularly the dramatic opening of "Speak to Me" and "Breathe," David Gilmour's searing guitar solo in "Time," the tidal wave emotion of Clare Torry's wordless vocals on "The Great Gig in the Sky," the ethereal beauty and poignancy of "Us and Them," and the rousing climax of "Brain Damage" and "Eclipse." I love the mesmerizing evocation of travel in "On the Run," the sparkling instrumental "Any Colour You Like," and the way "Money" rocks out. It's my Desert Island Disc, the one album I would take with me if I could only take one.

I'm hardly alone in my sentiments. There is a power and majesty to Pink Floyd's music that resonates with so many. *Dark Side* has sold an estimated 45 million copies worldwide while setting a record for longevity on the Billboard 200 albums chart (724 consecutive weeks after its release, and more than 950 when accounting for reappearances). The band's subsequent classics—*Wish You Were Here*, *Animals* and *The Wall*—have more edge. *Dark Side* is Floyd at their most accessible, concise best. Their breakthrough masterpiece, it stands as a kind of alpha and omega for one of the world's greatest rock bands, which make its creation and success a fascinating story.



UNDERGROUND LEGENDS
Guitarist-songwriter Roger Keith "Syd" Barrett (far right) gave Pink Floyd a name, identity, style and path to fame.

ROGER WATERS
Bumped from rhythm guitar to bass by Barrett, Waters later took over as the band's leader and main lyricist.

DAVID GILMOUR
The voice and guitar of Barrett's friend and replacement became a signature part of Pink Floyd's new direction.

NICK MASON
The inventive, witty drummer navigated the band's personality conflicts as the only member to play on every Floyd album and tour.

RICK WRIGHT
Gilmour called the quiet keyboardist’s soulful voice and playing “vital, magical components of our most recognized … sound.”

CHAPTER 1

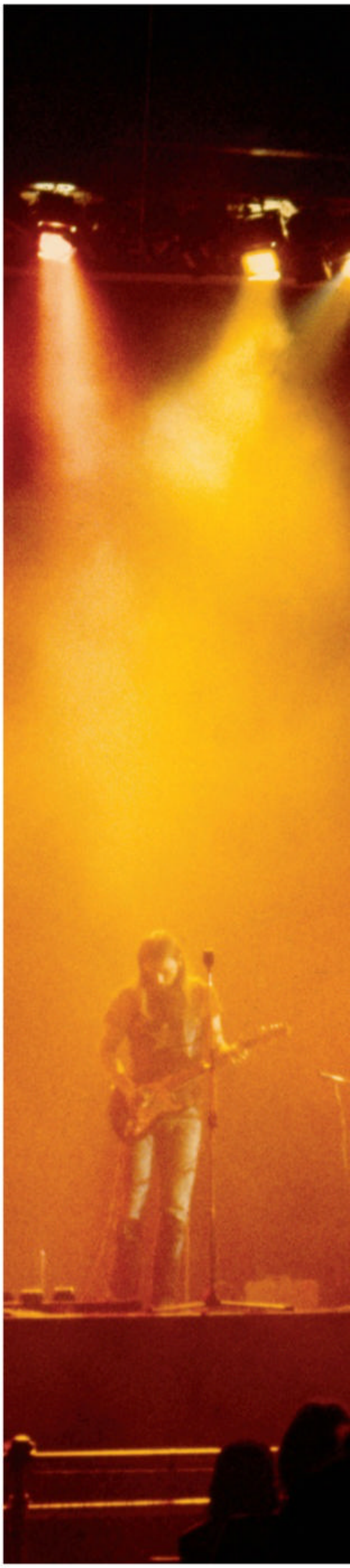
BALANCED ON THE BIGGEST WAVE

DARK SIDE HITS HOME

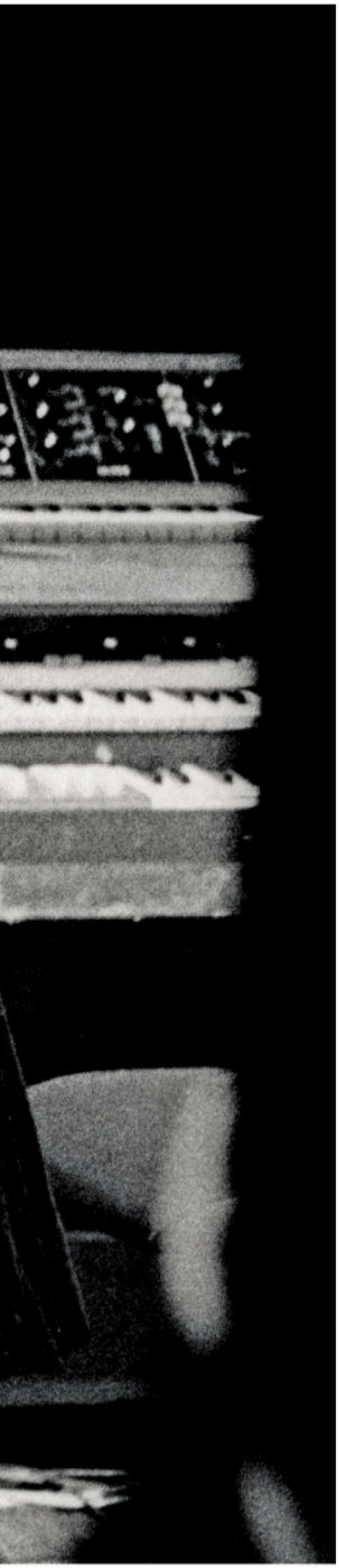
THE REASONS FOR *THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON'S*

legendary status and enduring appeal now seem obvious but its overwhelming success was a surprise. When the album dropped, Pink Floyd had a reverent though relatively small worldwide following (compared to contemporaries like the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and the Who), modest record sales (none of their albums had broken the top 40 in the U.S.) and little mainstream radio airplay. Fortunately, the band was blessed by a confluence of events.

For starters, the albums *Pet Sounds* by the Beach Boys (1966) and *Revolver* (1966) and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) by the Beatles had revealed the extent to which a band could utilize a recording studio in groundbreaking ways. The Who's 1969 rock opera, *Tommy*, had popularized the concept album containing a cohesive theme or story.



STAGE IS SET
The Dark Side of the Moon grew in and out of Pink Floyd's incomparable, unforgettable live shows.



ANY COLOR YOU LIKE
Rick Wright's distinctive keyboard palette was blooming by the time Pink Floyd created their first masterpiece.

PINK FLOYD HAD BEEN MAKING THEIR OWN MARK ON THIS WIDE, OPEN LANDSCAPE.

A wave of extraordinary creativity was unleashed as rock music became a sprawling tent where bands were allowed to play hard rock, heavy metal, blues, folk, country, jazz, Latin, classical or inventive mixes of genres and still be popular. So-called "progressive rock" blossomed in the early 1970s with bands like King Crimson, Yes, Genesis, Tangerine Dream, and Emerson, Lake and Palmer using synthesizers and other cutting edge electronics to produce complex pieces of considerable length.

Pink Floyd had been making their own mark on this wide, open landscape. Born in London's underground psychedelic rock scene of the mid-'60s, they were known mainly for their atmospheric, avant-garde songs that easily lent themselves to grooving with a black light bulb and a joint or something stronger. Though highly innovative in the studio, Pink Floyd's success had mostly stemmed from the experience of seeing them live where their thrilling integration of mesmerizing music, dramatic lighting and sound effects set them apart.

Dark Side arrived at a time when FM radio was in full flower with a welcoming "anything goes" approach to what was played on the air. High-quality home stereos were affordable. Pristinely recorded

“IT SEEMED LIKE EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR THIS ALBUM, FOR SOMEONE TO MAKE IT.”

with an arresting array of sounds and segues, *Dark Side* was the record many people chose, and continue to choose, to take full advantage of their sound systems. The album was also attractively packaged with a now-iconic cover that originally included two cool posters and two stickers.

But there was much more to *Dark Side*’s appeal than that. Loaded with great songs, it moved listeners because it spoke sincerely and cohesively to its era. The peace and love ideals of the ’60s were fading in the tired cynicism of Watergate and the Pentagon Papers. The Vietnam war was winding down with more than 3 million dead or wounded. The threat of nuclear annihilation was still present. Economic recession was gripping the Western world.

Every year is getting shorter, never seem to find the time. Plans that either come to naught or half a page of scribbled lines. Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way, the time is gone the song is over, thought I’d something more to say

“It touched a nerve at the time,” keyboardist Richard Wright told Nicholas Schaffner, author of 1991’s *Saucerful of Secrets: The Pink Floyd Odyssey*. “It seemed like everyone was waiting for this album, for someone to make it.”

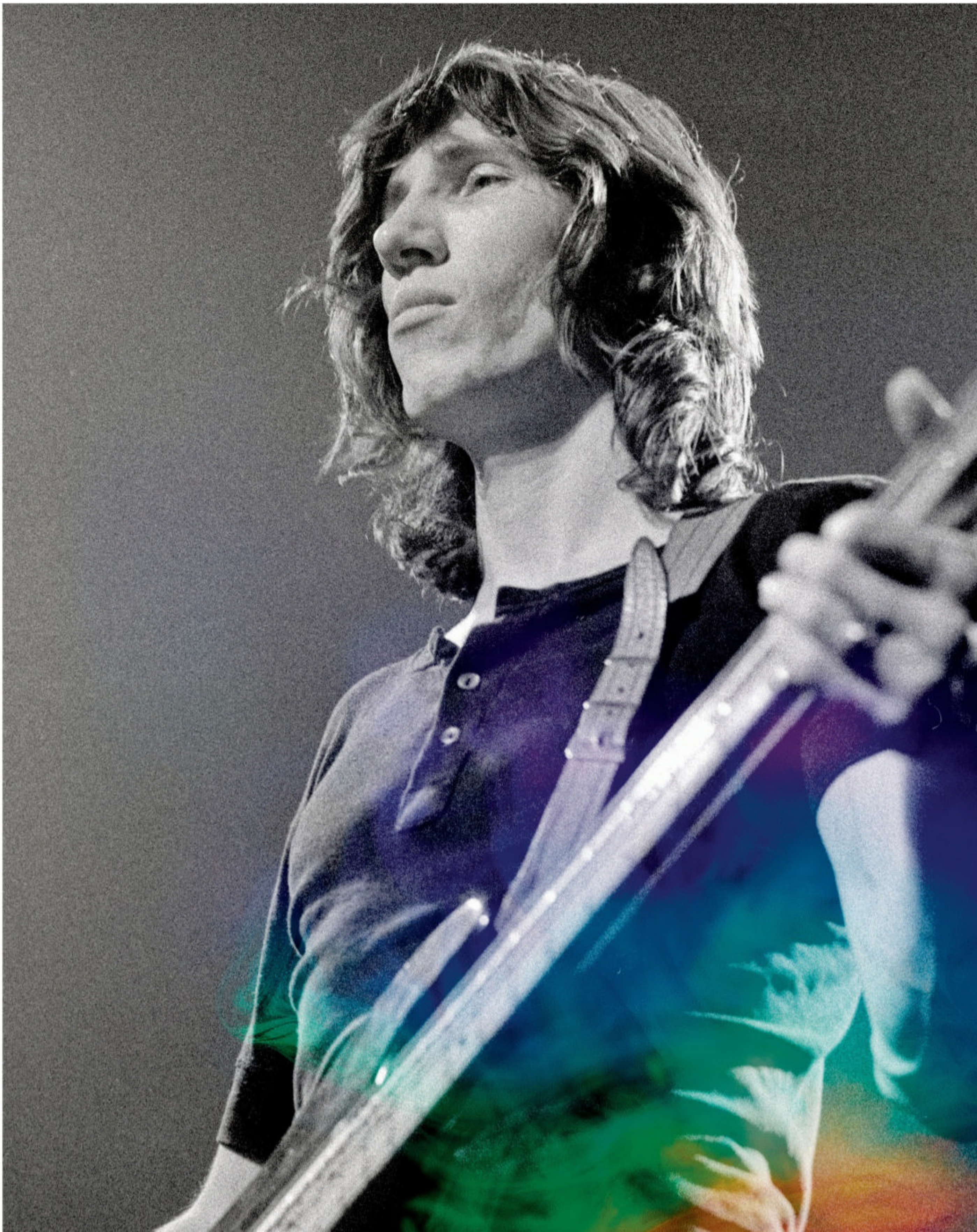
That the someone was Pink Floyd was a surprise. Social commentators, they had not been. Along with their lingering reputation as a band for stoners, much of their material had been colored by science fiction (songs such as “Interstellar Overdrive,” “Astronomy Domine,” and the extraterrestrial contact saga “Let There Be More Light”). Pink Floyd had also produced music for the BBC’s coverage of the Apollo 11 moon landing in July 1969.

“Forward,” he cried from the rear and the front rank died. And the general sat and the lines on the map moved from side to side

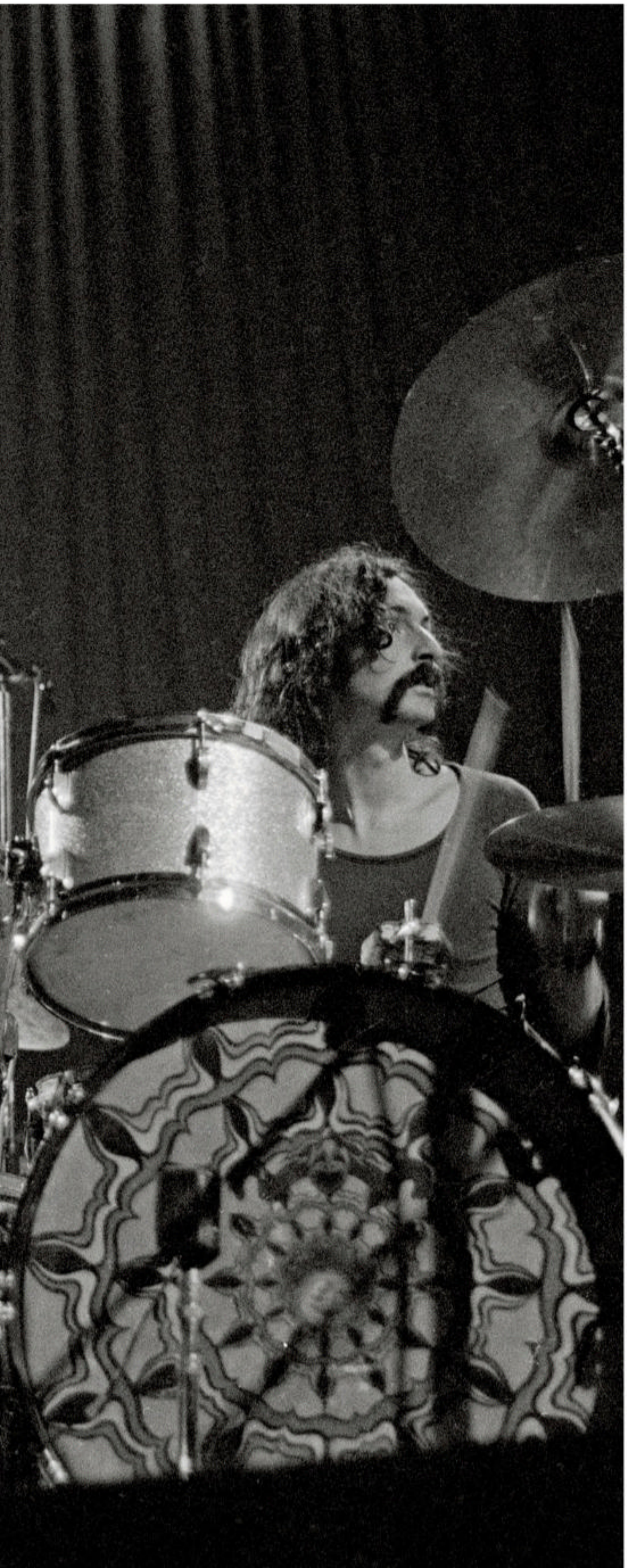
It’s pretty safe to say few people expected a profound, earthly statement album from this band. While *Dark Side*’s songs rocked and transfixed listeners, the lyrics by Roger Waters addressed life and the world in a direct, incisive way that ranks with the work of Bob Dylan and John Lennon, two artists who had deeply influenced him.

Money, get back. I’m all right Jack, keep your hands off of my stack. Money, it’s a hit. Don’t give me that do-goody-good bulls. I’m in the high-fidelity first-class traveling set and I think wwI need a Learjet***

TIMELESS WORDS
For his song "Time," Waters referenced "quiet desperation" from Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods.*



PERFECT COMBO David Gilmour's musical sense and Nick Mason's quirky creativity helped make dark subjects enjoyable.



DARK SIDE WAS THE FULL FLOWERING OF THE TALENTS OF WATERS, WRIGHT, GILMOUR AND MASON.

During the course of interviews through the years, Waters has said he thinks the record hit home because it speaks to common psychological and emotional concerns and life's Big Picture. "When I say, 'I'll see you on the dark side of the moon,'" he is quoted as saying in the book *The Dark Side of the Moon* by John Harris, "what I mean [is] ... If you feel that you're the only one ... that you seem crazy, 'cos you think everything is crazy, you're not alone."

And if the dam breaks open many years too soon. And if there is no room upon the hill. And if your head explodes with dark forebodings too, I'll see you on the dark side of the moon

Last but hardly least, *Dark Side* was the full flowering of the considerable talents of Waters, Wright, guitarist David Gilmour and drummer Nick Mason. Working with inspiration, a collective spirit and a superb supporting cast, they produced a true masterwork. It also took a little bit of luck.

CHAPTER 2

THE LUNATIC IS IN MY HEAD

THE ROOTS OF PINK FLOYD

JUST DANDIES
The band's initial goal was, says Nick Mason, "appearing on *Top of the Pops*, wearing flared trousers and having girls chase us."

ONE DAY IN FEBRUARY 1968,

four members of a promising British band were heading to a gig in Southampton, England. In the car were Roger Waters, 24, Rick Wright, 22, Nick Mason, 23, David Gilmour, 23, and a fateful question.

"Shall we pick up Syd?" one of them asked, referring to their frontman and main songwriter, Syd Barrett, 22.

"And the response was, 'No, f*** it, let's not bother,'" Mason recalled in his memoir *Inside Out: A Personal History of Pink Floyd*. That brave (many thought foolish) decision set the four men in the car on a course to *The Dark Side of the Moon*.

The earliest interation of the band formed in 1963 at London's Regent Street Polytechnic college, with Waters, Wright and Mason joining schoolmates Clive Metcalfe and Keith Noble. According to Mason, taking fine art and graphics courses "probably explains why Roger, Rick and I all, to a greater or lesser degree, shared an enthusiasm for the possibilities offered by technology and visual effects."

Starting with a typical repertoire of R&B and rock covers (Bo Diddley songs, "Louie Louie," etc.), Sigma 6—later the Architectural Abdabs, the Megadeaths, Leonard's Lodgers and the Tea Set—went through several lineups while playing mostly private parties and school functions. After moving into a house owned by Mike Leonard, a tutor at Regent Street who designed stage lighting, the band incorporated his equipment into their act after learning that American groups such as the Grateful Dead were using light shows in San Francisco's psychedelic scene, which had a counterpart in London's underground clubs. "We just thought, 'Yeah, this will work,'" Waters explained to interviewer Jim Ladd in 1992.

It was at Leonard's house that Barrett, Waters' friend from his hometown of Cambridge, joined while attending a practice session in 1964. A charismatic talent, Barrett brought in an original, adventurous style that allowed the band to stretch its modest arsenal of tunes with long, wild free-form jams that could fill the two or three sets they had to play at their gigs. He also wrote unique songs laced with whimsical fantasy, rural charm and childlike madness. And he gave the band a brilliantly distinctive name.

After arriving at a gig and discovering that another Tea Set was on the bill, Barrett came up with the Pink Floyd Sound by combining the names of two obscure bluesmen—Pink Anderson and Floyd Council—that he'd seen on a record sleeve. "We were fortunate that the very abstraction of the combination Pink and Floyd had a suitable and vaguely psychedelic suggestiveness that a name along the lines of The Howlin' Crawlin' King Snakes might not have offered," Mason wrote in *Inside Out*.

Pink Floyd became the scene's "house band" at local venues such All Saints Hall, the Marquee Club, UFO and the Roundhouse where they performed at all night "happenings," attracting ever larger crowds, media attention and luminaries such as Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles. Paul McCartney declared Pink Floyd "a knockout" but Wright later admitted, "I suspect we got away with some of the stuff we did because everyone in the audience was quite stoned."

"I SUSPECT WE GOT AWAY WITH SOME OF THE STUFF WE DID BECAUSE EVERYONE WAS STONED."

TRUE COLORS
Psychedelia was, in drummer Mason's view, "around us, not in us," as Pink Floyd (opposite) focused on being a working band.

THE VISIONARY
Syd Barrett said in 1967 that groups would someday have to offer well-presented theater shows, not just sets of songs.

ICONIC PIPERS Photographer Vic Singh took Pink Floyd's evocative debut album cover shot (below) using a prism lens he got from George Harrison.

TRAGIC LEGEND Engulfed by drug-fueled mental illness, Barrett (opposite) did three solo albums, two with help from Gilmour, Wright and Waters.

[redacted]

Nevertheless, music managers Peter Jenner and Andrew King were so impressed they signed Pink Floyd to a management deal. That led to an extremely fortunate record contract with EMI, the Beatles' label, for a 5,000-pound advance (about $88,000 today) plus studio costs. Mingling with the Fab Four and working with their engineers, Pink Floyd got an invaluable education in the art of recording.

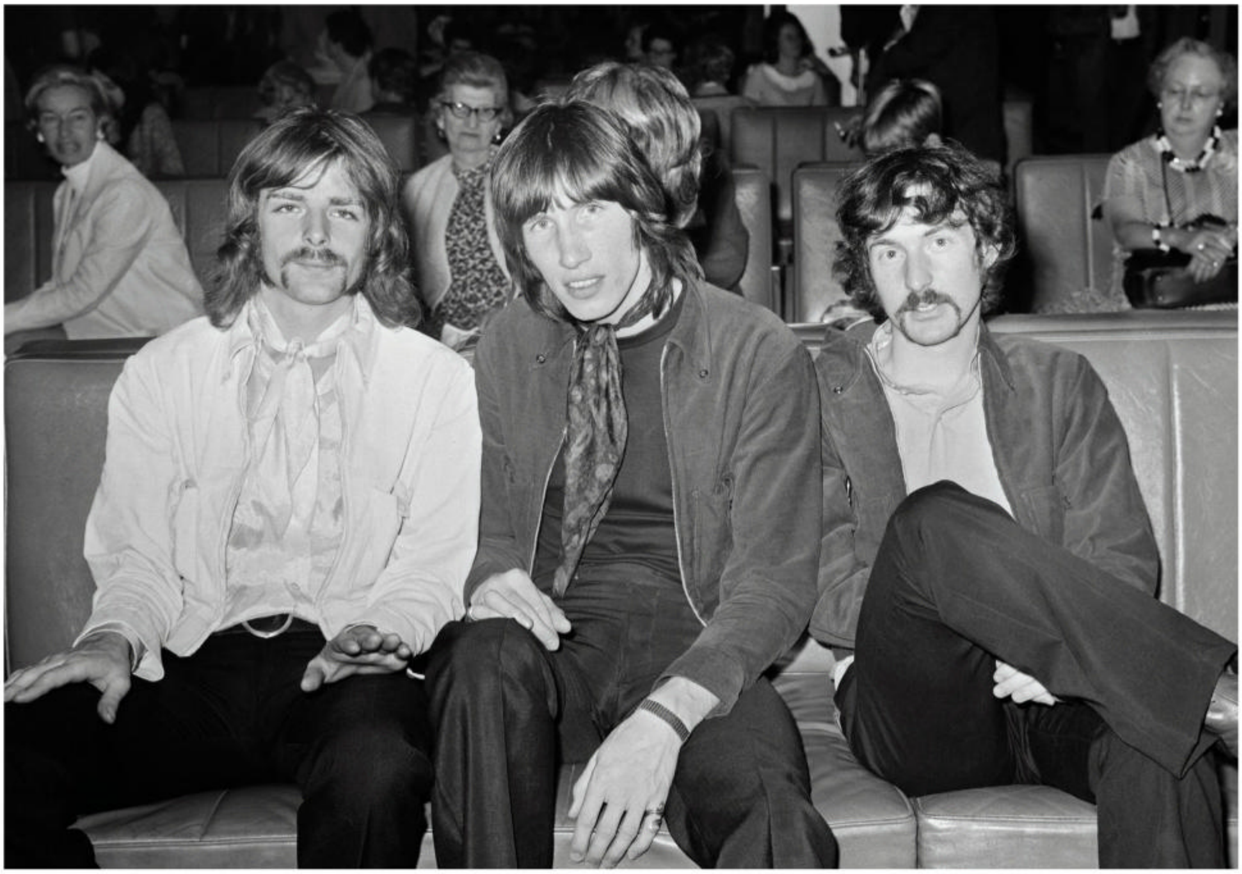
Their first single, Barrett's "Arnold Layne" (inspired by the true case of a man stealing ladies' garments from backyard clotheslines) was released in March 1967. It went top 20 in the U.K. despite being banned by Radio London for alleged indecency. Its follow-up, Barrett's "See Emily Play," about a young woman losing her mind in loneliness, hit the top 10 (but only No. 134 in America). Their debut album, *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, was recorded at EMI Studios on Abbey Road while the Beatles were there creating a little record called *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Now a classic of pop-tinged psychedelic rock, *Piper* reached No. 6 on the U.K. charts and No. 131 in the U.S. after its release in August '67.

Handling their growing success was challenging enough without Barrett ingesting a steady diet of LSD and other illicit drugs supplied by friends and hangers-on. He became erratic, withdrawn and incoherent, doing odd things during shows like staring blankly while de-tuning his guitar until the strings fell off as the rest of the band frantically tried to cover for him. "Syd turned into a very strange person," Waters told Barry Miles for *Pink Floyd: A Visual Documentary*. "All I know is that he was f***ing murder to live and work with."

On a more explainable level, Barrett was rebelling against the demands and pressures of stardom, subjects Waters would explore on *Dark Side* and later albums. But Barrett's unraveling coincided with Pink Floyd's first U.S. tour, which was cut short after some disastrous gigs and awkward TV appearances on shows such as *American Bandstand*. With another album in progress, their new single "Apples and Oranges" tanking, and touring bills mounting, Waters, Wright and Mason were desperate to save their momentum. So a call went out to David Gilmour.

"SYD TURNED INTO A VERY STRANGE PERSON… HE WAS MURDER TO LIVE AND WORK WITH."

[redacted]



A friend of Waters and Barrett from Cambridge, Gilmour had a reputation as an ace guitarist and singer. After touring England and Europe with struggling bands, he was making ends meet by driving a delivery truck. Naturally, he was happy to join a group with a record deal, but still was wary. “It seems ridiculous now, but I thought the band was awfully bad at the time when I joined,” Gilmour told *Rolling Stone* in 1987. “The gigs I’d seen with Syd were incredibly undisciplined. The leader figure was falling apart, and so was the band.”

Trying to function as a five-piece with Barrett contributing songs lasted a few harrowing gigs marked by bizarre, uncommercial tunes like “Scream Thy Last Scream” and “Vegetable Man.” So Barrett was booted, leaving Gilmour to fill the void left by his friend, who wasn’t happy about it. Nor were the band’s managers, who cut ties.

The result was new management (Steve O’Rourke) and a different dynamic: Gilmour and Wright spearheading the music and Waters emerging as the primary lyricist. “Roger assumed leadership of Pink Floyd because he was leadership material,” Gilmour told the *Daily Telegraph* in 2002. “He was bossy and pushy, and I’m very grateful that he was there to take the reins.”

Barrett’s plight—he recorded three solo albums and became an eccentric recluse—haunted the band until his death in 2006, inspiring their best work and guilt for leaving him behind. “It couldn’t have happened without him,” Waters said in 1975. “But on the other hand, it couldn’t have gone on with him.”

WHAT NOW?
Wright, Waters and Mason (left) wanted Jeff Beck of the Yardbirds to replace Barrett, but they didn't have the nerve to ask.

A NEW FLOYD
The first official photo (below) without Barrett, a lineup Nick Mason believes was "greater than the sum of the parts."

CHAPTER 3

COOKING UP A MASTERPIECE

THE CREATION OF *DARK SIDE*

NEARLY FOUR YEARS AFTER THEIR FATEFUL CAR RIDE,

Pink Floyd had a consequential meeting in the kitchen of Nick Mason's house in London to discuss what to do for a new album. Now established as an inventive band with a devoted following built by touring, Floyd's records without Syd Barrett had developed ground he'd broken. *A Saucerful of Secrets* (1968), the film soundtrack *More* (1969), *Ummagumma* (1969), *Atom Heart Mother* (1970) and *Meddle* (1971) were mixes of electric and acoustic songs, some with surreal passages that were a legacy of the band's psychedelic days. But a new, original style was steadily evolving.

KEYVOLUTION After an uneasy first year or so, Gilmour said his style "changed to fit Pink Floyd and Pink Floyd changed to fit my style."

INFLUENCES
Gilmour was influenced by (clockwise from top left) Pete Seeger, Eric Clapton, Howlin' Wolf and Jeff Beck, as well as Jimi Hendrix (opposite).

[redacted]

“We were constantly trying to do different things partly because we weren’t very good at doing normal things,” David Gilmour told interviewer Jim Ladd in 1992.

As Mason wrote in *Inside Out*, “David brought new strengths to the band ... He was as interested as the rest of us in experimenting with new sounds and effects, but alongside his inventiveness he also added a more thoughtful, structured approach, with the patience to develop a musical idea to its full potential. Meanwhile, Rick was supplying texture and melody, and Roger drive, discipline and musical forethought.”

Influenced by bluesman Lead Belly, folk icon Pete Seeger, and rock gods Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck, Gilmour’s moody guitar melded extremely well with Wright’s ethereal keyboards while their vocal harmonies became a key element of Pink Floyd’s sound. Self-taught with an unusual playing style and a love of classical and jazz, Wright shared an improvisational telepathy with Gilmour that forged a lasting musical partnership.

Pink Floyd were also very resourceful. Encouraged by Norman Smith, who produced *Piper at the Gates of Dawn* after working with the Beatles, they learned all they could about studio technology and availed themselves of Abbey Road’s sound effects library. Voices, footsteps, chirping birds, buzzing insects, roaring wind and more enhanced their albums and gigs. They rearranged, renamed and assembled songs into thematic live shows and used jam sessions to develop rough ideas, a chord progression or even a single distorted piano note into 20-minute epics such as “Atom Heart Mother” and “Echoes.”

“A Saucerful of Secrets” was composed according to shapes Waters and Mason had drawn on paper. Its ominous build up exploded into syncopated chaos with Gilmour using a microphone stand as a guitar slide and bowing the strings with a piece of steel. The nearly 12-minute song then wound down to Wright’s hymn-like organ coda with Gilmour’s wordless vocal.

“‘A Saucerful of Secrets’ was a very important track; it gave us our direction forward,” Gilmour

[redacted]

“‘A SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS’ WAS A VERY IMPORTANT TRACK; IT GAVE US OUR DIRECTION FORWARD.”

"I THINK EVERY ALBUM WAS A STEP TOWARDS *DARK SIDE OF THE MOON*, IN A SENSE."

explained in an interview with *Guitar World* in 1993. "If you take 'A Saucerful of Secrets,' 'Atom Heart Mother' and 'Echoes,' all lead logically to *Dark Side of the Moon*."

"I think every album was a step towards *Dark Side of the Moon*, in a sense," Wright explained to author Nick Schaffner. "We were learning all the time, the techniques of the recording, and our writing was getting better."

That was certainly true of Waters, who had begun composing more personal songs. Losing his father in World War II and being raised by a socialist mother who was a teacher had infused him with sympathy for the poor and oppressed, a prominent sentiment in his new material. This change of sensibilities was crucial for a band that felt a need to move with the times. "Unfortunately, we mark a sort of era," Mason said in 1972's *Pink Floyd Live at Pompeii*. "We're in danger of becoming a relic of the past."

Though, unlike Barrett, they weren't into mind-altering substances; Pink Floyd's drug-oriented image had been sustained by playing trippy songs live for four years while a "space music" tag persisted thanks to titles like "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun."

"The space thing was a joke," Waters told *Rolling Stone* in 1987. "None of those pieces were about outer space. They were about *inner* space. That's all it's ever been about—human beings and their insides, whether it was Syd's writing or mine," he said. "What was so stunning about Syd's songs was, through the whimsy and the crazy juxtaposition of ideas and words, there was a very powerful grasp of humanity. They were quintessentially human songs. And that is what I've always attempted to aspire to. In that sense, I feel a strong connection to Syd."

As Gilmour noted in a 2003 documentary, "The big move forward ... was Roger's coming of age lyrically, and having the ideas and intelligence to take a subject and examine it in all its parts."

That day at Mason's house, Waters proposed a concept album about things in life that drive people crazy. "As we talked, the subject of stress emerged as a common thread, although at the time we weren't

ONE DAY CLOSER
Waters' (opposite) new lyrics reflected his coming to grips with his own mortality and other earthly concerns.

HOME COOKING
Effects for "Money" were born in a metal mixing bowl in Judith Waters' (below left) pottery shed near husband Roger's home studio.

experiencing any particular angst," Mason wrote in *Inside Out*.

Now 28 and married, Waters was concerned that Pink Floyd were stuck on the music business treadmill. He'd also been struck by the thought that he was now living life instead of preparing for it, hence the lines in his new song "Time": *You are young and life is long, and there is time to kill today. And then one day you find 10 years have got behind you. No one told you when to run. You missed the starting gun.*

By making his lyrics broader and more universal, Waters turned a potential pity party for a rock band into a pithy "expression of political, philosophical, humanitarian empathy that was desperate to get out."

In late November 1971, Pink Floyd convened at Decca Studios in West Hampstead to develop their ideas. (Ironically, the site was where the Beatles had flunked their 1962 audition for Decca Records.) Waters brought in acoustic demos for "Time" and "Money," a biting take on greed. He also had a title

18+

WHAT IS
AVAXHOME?

STUDIO WIZARDS
With Beatles influences, an array of available instruments and effects, and evolving recording techniques, Pink Floyd soared.

> **“THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON” HAD BEEN MUSICALLY INSPIRED BY THE BEATLES’ “DEAR PRUDENCE.”**

and opening line (*Breathe, breathe in the air, don’t be afraid to care*) from a song he’d written for a movie, *The Body*. Some unused material came in handy as well:

Waters’ song “The Dark Side of the Moon” (later retitled “Brain Damage”) from the *Meddle* sessions had been musically inspired by the Beatles’ “Dear Prudence” and referred to Barrett, who was the “lunatic on the grass” cited in the lyrics. (The grass was a public square in Cambridge where Waters and Barrett used to hang out.) A churchy organ segment by Wright grew into “The Great Gig in the Sky” (initially titled “The Mortality Sequence”). His beautifully languid piano piece “The Violent Sequence,” rejected for the *Zabriskie Point* film soundtrack in 1968, became the bed for “Us and Them,” a lament about mankind’s division, conflict and indifference to suffering.

It was now a matter of tying it all together according to a list of subjects the band had compiled. According to Mason, they were: “Deadlines, travel, the stress of flying, the lure of money, a fear of dying and problems of mental instability spilling over into madness” (thus the album title’s reference to the moon, a symbol of lunacy).

Hardly typical material for a hugely popular record.

CHAPTER 4

THE GREAT GIG IN THE SKY

PINK FLOYD PERFECTED *DARK SIDE*

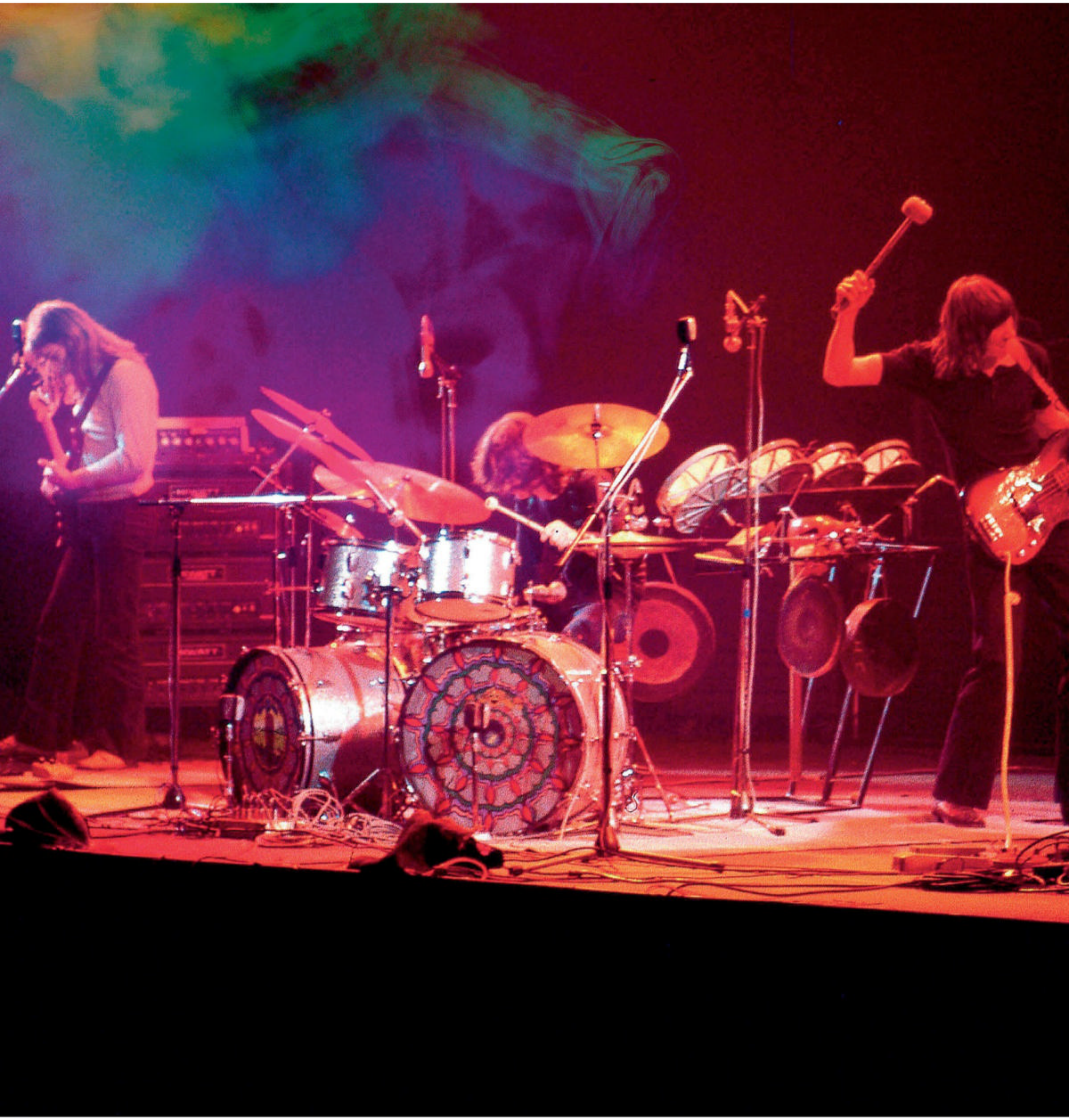
AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OF DEVELOPING AND REHEARSING

their new songs and a stage presentation for them, Pink Floyd premiered *The Dark Side of the Moon, A Piece for Assorted Lunatics* at the Brighton Dome in Bournemouth on Jan. 20, 1972. Unfortunately, an electrical malfunction cut the performance short during "Money," but by the start of four sold-out shows at London's 2,800-seat Rainbow Theatre three weeks later, things were going smoothly.

Staged with nine tons of lighting and sound equipment—including seven auditorium speakers with 360-degree quadraphonic sound and a 24-channel

JAM SIDE UP
Pink Floyd's best material often came from improvising onstage and in the studio.

A FRESH SET
Pink Floyd play old staple "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun" with new rototoms for "Time," set up behind Nick Mason.



“IN THEIR OWN TERMS, FLOYD STRIKINGLY SUCCEED. THEY ARE DRAMATISTS SUPREME.”

mixing desk—that required six hours to set up, *Dark Side* went over spectacularly well. No doubt, live performances were essential to promoting the album. A fan-recorded bootleg of one of the Rainbow shows sold 120,000 copies, a hint of the massive sales to come with the official release. (More than 40 bootlegs of *Dark Side* performances in the early ’70s are known to exist, some cleaned up and legally released such as one from London’s Empire Pool in 1974 that was included in the 2011 Experience Edition of the album.)

While the reviewer for music magazine *Melody Maker* oddly called the piece “a kind of space fantasy opera,” Derek Jewell of *The Sunday Times* gushed, “at the heart of all the multimedia intensity, they have ... an uncanny feeling for the melancholy of our times. In their own terms, Floyd strikingly succeed. They are dramatists supreme.”

As the band wound its way through England, Japan, Australia, the U.S. and Canada doing more than 80 shows that year, they kept fleshing out and refining *Dark Side* onstage. “It was a hell of a good way to develop a record,” Mason told Nicholas Schaffner. “You really get familiar with it; you learn the pieces you like and what you don’t like. And it’s quite interesting for the audience to hear a piece developed. If people saw it four times, it would have been different each time.”

“WE JUST MADE UP MIDDLE SECTIONS, GUITAR SOLOS AND ALL THAT STUFF.”

Opening with a heartbeat and synthesizer drone, the new “Breathe” soared on airy E minor and A chords lifted from Neil Young’s “Down by the River” and a musical chorus by Rick Wright based on the D7#9 chord used by Miles Davis in “Kind of Blue.” Instead of the synth-driven pieces they later became, the interstitial instrumentals “On the Run” (“Travel Sequence”) and “Any Colour You Like” (“Eclipse Scat Section”—the final title is ironic sales patter Waters heard from street peddlers whose merchandise only came in blue, and it occurred to him that life is full of choices that are essentially the same) were guitar jams. “Time” was slower. “The Great Gig in the Sky” had spoken passages from Ecclesiastes and by Catholic moralist Malcolm Muggeridge instead of a soaring female vocal. “Money” became a jaunty romp with musical roots in the R&B classic “Green Onions” that David Gilmour had covered with his early band Jokers Wild. It would later be recorded essentially live for the album with Rick Wright adding jazzy touches on a Wurlitzer electric piano equipped with a wah-wah pedal.

“We just made up middle sections, guitar solos and all that stuff,” Gilmour told *Guitar World* in 1993. “We also invented some new riffs—we created a 4/4 progression for the guitar solo and made the poor saxophone player play in 7/4.”

Discovering early on that the entire work needed a stirring finale after the downbeat “Brain Damage,” Waters wrote “Eclipse”—basically a list of life experiences (*All that you touch and all that you see, all you taste…*) in which harmony is overshadowed by discord (*and everything under the sun is tune but the sun is eclipsed by the moon*). “Eclipse” briefly became the working title of the forthcoming album after the band Medicine Head released its own *Dark Side of the Moon*. When that record tanked, Floyd returned to their original idea.

Recording did not begin at Abbey Road until the end of May 1972, but sessions at France’s Chateau d’Herouville studios in February for a soundtrack album hinted at things to come. *Obscured by Clouds*, done in six hectic days for the movie *La Vallée*, comprised 10 succinct songs. The rhythm in Gilmour’s “Childhood’s End” had a very “Time”-like feel as did the booming drone in the rocking “Free Four” by Waters, which mentions touring and the death of his father in war, two *Dark Side* themes.

Obscured by Clouds also marked Pink Floyd’s first prominent use of synthesizer. Though they were considered electronic wizards due to their use of gizmos such as mellotron, Binson Echorec and Azimuth Coordinator, they’d actually been creating most of their exotic effects with conventional instruments

ON THE RUN
The band's fear of flying inspired their use of a large model plane that crashed onto the stage during live shows.

"WHAT IMPRESSES ME NOW IS THAT WHAT WE ENDED UP WITH WAS FAIRLY WELL-STRUCTURED."

(guitars, organ, piano, gong, vibraphone) and some pedals. Compared to contemporary bands, Pink Floyd were synth newbies who barely knew how to use what they had: a portable analog VCS3. Since it had no keyboard, all they could do with it was create the boom for "Free Four," spacey drones for the title track, "Childhood's End" and "Absolutely Curtains," and the synth washes in "Mudmen."

The soundtrack album was a good warm-up for taking *Dark Side* into the studio. "We did the recording with the same method we had employed for *More*, following a rough cut of the film, using stopwatches for specific cues and creating interlinking musical moods that could be cross-faded to suit the final version," Mason wrote in *Inside Out*. "This method of evolving and modifying themes played to our strengths, but we had no scope for self-indulgence since the recording time available was extremely tight ... What impresses me now is that what we ended up with was fairly well-structured."

Structure and brevity with Floydian touches proved to be a very winning recipe. "Free Four" attracted far more FM airplay than the band usually got, and the album was their first to crack the top 50 in America. By the time Pink Floyd began recording their first blockbuster, they were primed and ready.

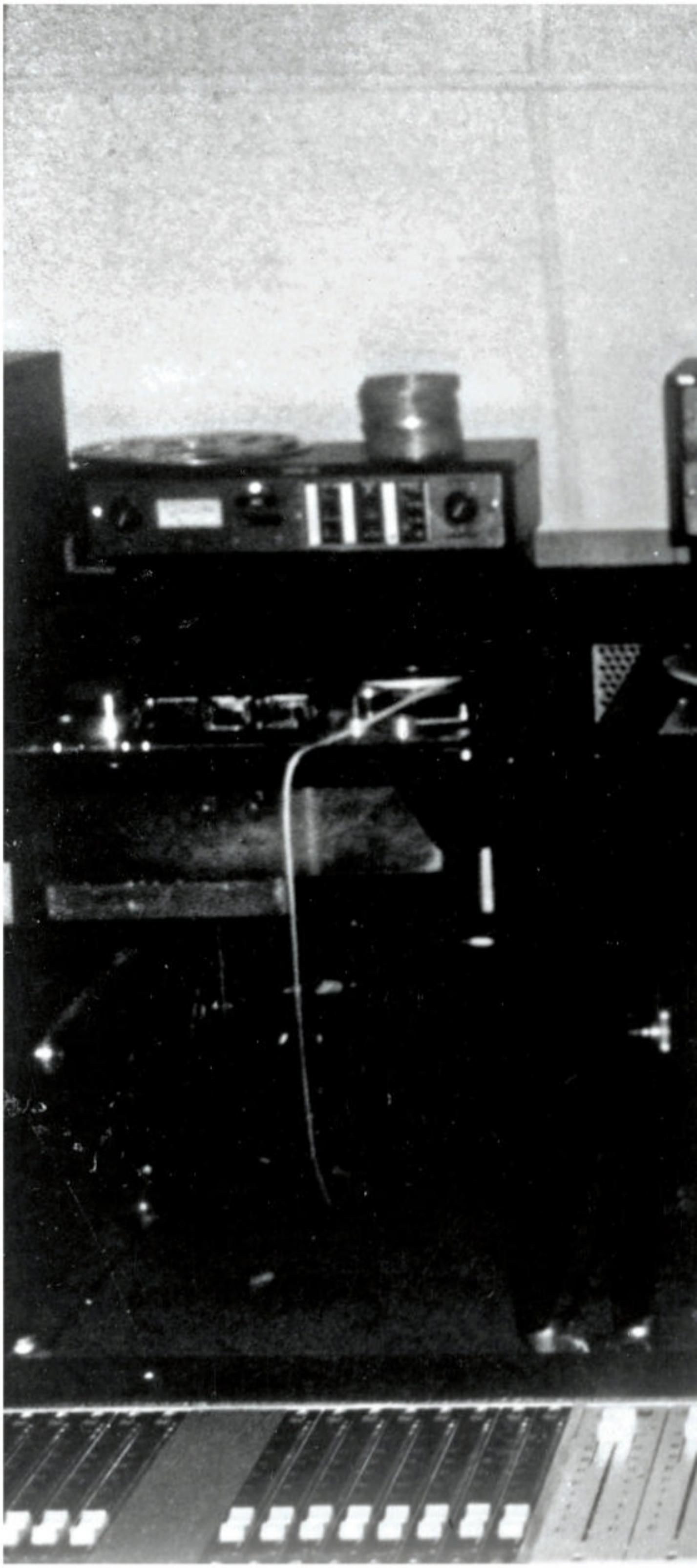
SYNTHESIS
Feeling two guitar-keyboard jams were too much for *Dark Side*, Pink Floyd reinvented one, "Travel Sequence," with synthesizers.

CHAPTER 5

US AND THEM

DARK SIDE'S SUPPORTING CAST

RISING STAR
The Dark Side of the Moon brought Parsons the first of his 13 Grammy nominations as an engineer or musician.



The Dark Side of the Moon **was produced by Pink Floyd, but significant contributions from talented individuals helped make it a dazzling gem.**

ALAN PARSONS:

One of the Beatles' studio wizards, Parsons began working for EMI at age 18. Inspired by hearing the then-new *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, "I couldn't wait to find out the secrets behind the album," he told *Guitar World* in 1993. "It left me totally in awe of the talent of the Beatles themselves, of course, but also the work behind the scenes in the studio."

Parsons helped engineer *Abbey Road* and *Let It Be* before working on George Harrison's solo classic *All Things Must Pass* and with Paul McCartney's band Wings. No stranger to Pink Floyd, having toiled on *Ummagumma* and *Atom Heart Mother*, Parsons was thrilled to be hired for *Dark Side*. "The Floyd were, by their nature, audio experimentalists," Parsons told author John Harris. "And to be the engineer with that kind of outfit was a dream come true. The Beatles were the only band who had done that ... The Floyd and the Beatles have a lot in common in that respect."

As Nick Mason wrote in *Inside Out*: "Having come through the EMI apprentice system, Alan had acquired—as all EMI trainees did—a remarkably thorough knowledge of all aspects of working in a recording studio. He was a bloody good engineer. But he also had a very good ear and was a capable musician in his own right. This, combined with his natural diplomatic skills, helped enormously and meant he could make an active and positive contribution to the album."

Parsons, who was paid a weekly wage of 35 pounds ($425 now), earned a Grammy nomination for Best Engineered Album and went on to success with his own band, the Alan Parsons Project.

CHRIS THOMAS:

Also a musician, Thomas landed a production gig at EMI after writing to George Martin, the Beatles' legendary producer, for career advice. Finding himself in the studio during the making of their White Album, Thomas played harpsichord on "Piggies" and mellotron on "Bungalow Bill" along with his engineering duties. He later became a sought-after producer for Roxy Music, Procol Harum, Badfinger and Climax Blues Band.

As David Gilmour told *Guitar World* in 1993: "Chris Thomas came in for the mixes and his role was essentially to stop the arguments between me and Roger about how it should be mixed. I wanted *Dark Side* to be big and swampy and wet, with reverbs and things like that. And Roger was very keen on it being a very dry album ... We argued so much that it was suggested we get a third opinion."

Ironically, Thomas found working on *Dark Side* deflating. "I didn't like it when I finished it," he told *Mix* magazine. "The album before that was *Meddle*, which had 'Echoes' on it, and I had hoped they were going to get into something like that, but *Dark Side* was just a bunch of songs. And bunches of songs are what I always did, so I thought, 'Great. Pink Floyd. I'll get to do something strange and out of the ordinary.' But that wasn't really the case."

DORIS TROY, LESLEY DUNCAN, LIZA STRIKE AND BARRY ST. JOHN:

A 20-voice choir had played a lead role in "Atom Heart Mother" but these four veterans of backup work with John Lennon, Elton John, Rod Stewart and James Brown were called upon to add a soulful flavor to "Time," "Money," "Us and Them" and "Brain Damage." Troy was the final ingredient Pink Floyd had been seeking to give "Eclipse" a climactic kick. "She did two passes and it was incredible," Waters says in the book *Pink Floyd: All the Songs*. "We knew we had the album in the bag."

BARRY ST. JOHN
The singer (opposite), whose real name was Eliza Janet Thomson, had a U.K. top 40 hit titled “Come Away Melinda” in 1965.

DORIS TROY
Troy (below), who was from New York City, became the subject of the popular off-Broadway show *Mama, I Want to Sing!*

SAXED UP
Dick Parry's place in Floyd history was acknowledged by his guest appearance with them at Live 8 in 2005.

RATHER THAN DOMINATE PIECES, DICK PARRY WAS ASKED TO WARM THEM WITH JAZZY PHRASING AND SOLOS.

DICK PARRY:

When a trombone didn't sound right on "Money," the Floyd decided to try sax but didn't know who to call. So Gilmour rang up an acquaintance with whom he'd played in Sunday night jazz jams as a teen in Cambridge. Horns had been used on Floyd records, most notably *Atom Heart Mother*, but rather than dominate pieces, Dick Parry was asked to warm them with jazzy phrasing and solos, which he did beautifully on "Money" and "Us and Them," giving *Dark Side* more appeal.

Parry's relationship with Pink Floyd turned out to be long-lasting. He toured with them from 1973-77 and in 1994, supported Gilmour's solo tours (2001, '02, and '06), and joined the band for its reunion at Live 8 in 2005. He also recorded with an assortment of other artists including Rory Gallagher, Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band and Lightnin' Slim.

CLARE TORRY:

Parsons recommended the British singer after his idea of using NASA spacewalk audio on "The Great Gig in the Sky" was rejected. (Nick Mason had suggested mezzo-soprano Cathy Berberian.) Torry, who'd been making albums of pop covers, didn't like the Floyd but fit them into her schedule and was vexed when no one could tell her exactly what to sing. After listening to the backing track, her first take was rejected because she sang "Oh baby" a few times. "No words," she was told. "Just emotion." Given a Heineken by Gilmour to help her relax, she decided to emulate an instrument and cut loose with a goosebump-inducing performance. "I've often wondered if it was the devil grinning up at me or God smiling down," she has said. "It was extremely tiring. I had beads of sweat on me."

When Torry was greeted by near silence, she assumed her vocal wouldn't be used, but the Floyd had been left speechless. Thirty years later, Rick Wright said: "Even today I just can't believe the effect it has on me and I guess everyone else."

Torry received only 30 pounds (about $400 now) and tickets to a Floyd gig for her effort, though many years later she successfully sued for a co-composer's credit. She also sang on Waters' solo album *Radio K.A.O.S.* and records by other bands.

STORM THORGERSON:

A friend of Waters and Barrett from Cambridge, Thorgerson began designing Pink Floyd's album covers with *A Saucerful of Secrets*. His graphics firm Hipgnosis (Barrett provided the name) became synonymous with cool, surreal album art after producing now-classic work for Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Genesis and many others. When Wright requested something simple and precise for *Dark Side*, Thorgerson recalled a photo he'd seen of a prism refracting a beam of light into a spectrum and was reminded of Floyd's light show. "The other thing was the triangle," he told *Rolling Stone* in 2011. "I think the triangle, which is a symbol of thought and ambition, was very much a subject of Roger's lyrics."

Ten cover ideas were presented to the band, among them Marvel's Silver Surfer comic book character traversing the universe, but the prism was the instant, unanimous choice. "It's a brilliant cover," Gilmour told *Rolling Stone*. "One can look at it after that first moment of brilliance and think, 'Well, it's a very commercial idea: It's very stark and simple; it'll look great in shop windows.'"

The now iconic image, rendered by Hipgnosis staff artist George Hardie, was also apt in that Pink Floyd's new album broadened and sharpened their musical focus in a dramatically striking way.

WONDER WOMAN Clare Torry (opposite) needed only two takes (they were combined) to nail her vocal on “The Great Gig in the Sky.”

IMAGE MAKER Storm Thorgerson’s (below) work for his graphics firm Hipgnosis was influenced by surrealists Salvador Dali and René Magritte.

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CHAPTER 6

SMILES YOU'LL GIVE AND TEARS YOU'LL CRY

MAKING *DARK SIDE*

WEM
WEM
PINK
FLOYD.
LONDON

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON WAS RECORDED IN ABOUT 40 STUDIO SESSIONS

that ran from May 30, 1972, to Feb. 19, 1973, with breaks for brief tours in between. Glimpses of the work can be seen in the movie *Pink Floyd Live at Pompeii*. "We all knew the material," David Gilmour told *Mojo* in 1994. "The playing was very good. It had a natural feel." As Roger Waters told author John Harris: "We were all trying to do as much as we possibly could. It was a very communal thing."

"There was a very nice atmosphere in the studio," Chris Thomas recalled to *Mix* magazine. "They were funny, witty people to be around, and it was very productive." Whenever the band went off to watch Monty Python's TV show, Alan Parsons did rough mixes and came up with ideas. One was recording assistant

LIVE AT POMPEII
Director Adrian Maben's film captured Pink Floyd paying homage to their past while on the cusp of superstardom.

CHAPTER 6

HANDS ON DECK
For complex pieces, each member of the band had to simultaneously handle a track on Abbey Road's recording console.

“JUST COMPILING THE EFFECTS LOOP... TOOK ALL DAY.... IF YOU DID THAT ON PRO TOOLS NOW, IT WOULD TAKE 10 MINUTES.”

engineer Peter James running back and forth, his huffing and footsteps added to “On the Run.”

It’s remarkable that *Dark Side*’s seamless flow and complex effects were achieved with technology that now makes the effort akin to building the Great Pyramids without cranes. Abbey Road’s 16-track mixing board didn’t have room for everything the Floyd wanted to include. To make space, instruments and effects had to be combined on single tracks and the album ended up being printed off second- and third-generation masters that had been the objects of constant efforts to perfect so that everything, such as the tubular bells on “Brain Damage,” could be clearly heard.

“Just compiling the effects loop and getting all of the rhythmic sounds for ‘Money’ took all day,” Parsons told *Guitar World*. “You literally had to measure, with a ruler, the length of tape between each effect. If you did that on Pro Tools now, it would take 10 minutes.”

“On the Run” took eight months because it had so much that required careful coordination: synth whooshes and explosions, a reversed guitar (played with a mic stand leg), footsteps and airport announcements. (The plane crash at the end was a

> **“I COULDN’T DO WHAT OTHER GUITAR PLAYERS COULD DO, SO I HAD TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.”**

grim nod to Rick Wright’s fear of flying.). The echoed words in “Us and Them” were especially tricky, but Parsons created the delay by linking a modified eight-track to the recording console.

Abbey Road became a mad scientist’s lab with mic stands serving as spindles to keep eight-foot pieces of recording tape from getting tangled. “After a while, the whole room started to look like a deranged Heath Robinson contraption,” Nick Mason wrote in *Inside Out*. “The machines would be stopped and restarted while trembling hands worked the faders. A single mistake would mean starting the whole process from scratch.”

Waters created now famous effects for “Money” by tossing coins in a mixing bowl in his wife’s pottery shed. Seven sounds, including cash registers, were later spliced together. Part of that loop was included in “Speak to Me,” the album’s overture that starts with a heartbeat (suggestive of life) simulated by Mason striking his padded bass drum with a mallet. It includes voices and sounds to come before hurtling on a reversed piano chord and cymbal into “Breathe.”

For “Time,” Parsons provided chiming clocks he’d recorded for a sound effects record. Mason’s tuned rototoms are an effective touch, as is the band’s more advanced use of synthesizers. Working with a VCS3 and EMS Synthi AKS, Gilmour and Waters created an eight-note sequence for “On the Run” that was sped up to 165 beats per minute and augmented by Mason on hi-hat. The result had an urgency that suggests rushing from place to place like the band did on tour. Wright’s Minimoog solo lent a demented mood to “Brain Damage” and his glowing runs made “Any Colour You Like” truly vibrant.

The most significant musical development was the blossoming of Gilmour’s guitar playing that landed him in the ranks of ’70s axe gods. Never before had he sounded so big, powerful and memorable. Constantly striving for just the right sound and relying on tone, phrasing and “any trick in the book,” he told *Guitar World,* “I think I did the first two solos [for ‘Money’] on a Fender Stratocaster, but the last one was done on a different guitar—a Lewis … It had a whole two octaves on the neck, which meant I could get up to notes that I couldn’t play on the Stratocaster.”

Gilmour confessed to the *Daily Telegraph* in 2002: “My fingers are very slow. I couldn’t do what other guitar players could do, so I had to do something different. And my way was trying to create guitar

RARE FORM
Gilmour's superb solos in the studio moved Waters to dryly say, "Oh, I think we may be able to get away with that one, Dave."

OTHER VOICES
Waters (below) was pushed by Gilmour to sing lead on *Dark Side*'s final two tracks; Wright (opposite) shared the lead on "Time."

[redacted]

melodies over what we did." His now classic solo on "Time" had an anguished wail that reinforced the despair of the lyrics. "To get that kind of singing sustain, though, you really need to play loud—at or near the feedback threshold," he said, telling *Guitar World* in 2006 that "it's just so much more fun to play when you have a good guitar sound—when bent notes slice right through you like a razor blade."

Gilmour mainly used a Hiwatt stack, Binson Echorec, Colorsound Power Boost pedal and Hi-Fli effects processor. As Parsons told *Guitar World*, "the sound on the album is pretty much what came out of his amp" with a microphone about 18 inches away. Gilmour also employed a lap steel to great effect on "Breathe" and "The Great Gig in the Sky," which Wright worked hard to perfect. The original organ intro was used for "Us and Them" in favor of piano, which Wright recorded in Abbey Road's classical studio in an attempt to create a concert feel. "I'm very proud of it," he told interviewer John Edginton. "And I thank Clare Torry for that magic day when she put the voice on."

A final touch of genius was the spoken bits that gave the album a uniquely human touch. With recording almost done, Waters wrote questions such as "Do you ever think you're going mad?" and "When was the last time you were violent?" on note cards. Answers from people at Abbey Road were recorded.

Paul McCartney was too guarded to contribute, but Floyd crew member Chris Adamson's contribution ("I've been mad for f***ing years, absolutely years") was used in "Speak to Me" (the title came from Alan Parsons' command to start talking) along with Abbey Road doorman Gerry O'Driscoll's "I've always been mad, I know I've been mad like most of us have." Roadie Roger "The Hat" Manifold's account of a run-in with a motorist—"I mean, they're gonna kill you. So like, if you give them a quick, short, sharp, shock, they don't do it again, dig it?"—went on "Us and Them." Road manager Peter Watts' maniacal laughter was perfect for "Brain Damage" and O'Driscoll provided the album's apt closing lines: "There is no dark side of the moon, really. Matter of fact, it's all dark."

When Gilmour first heard the entire finished work, he thought: "My God—we've really done something fantastic." Mason felt it was the band's best work, as did Wright, who said: "I thought, 'This is going to be big. This is an excellent album.'" When Waters' wife cried after hearing it, he thought: "That's a very good sign. We've definitely got something here."

[redacted]

CHAPTER 7

DARK SIDE TAKES OFF

PINK FLOYD FINALLY GOT A PUSH

LIKE A LOT OF RECORDING ARTISTS, PINK FLOYD GRUMBLED ABOUT THEIR RECORD LABEL.

Specifically, they didn't think EMI did enough to bring their work to the world. That changed with *Dark Side*. Wooed by Columbia with a reported $1 million advance, they signed a deal for future work. Bhagkar Menon, the new chairman of EMI's U.S. distributor, Capitol, saw what was coming and moved to capitalize on what he knew would be a classic.

"It struck me as a record that would be as crucial as *Sgt. Pepper*," Menon told author John Harris. "It was unbelievably stirring music. In the early

REMEMBER A DAY
The touring memorabilia exhibit "Pink Floyd: Their Mortal Remains" opened at London's Victoria and Albert Museum in 2017.

Earls Court Concerts
PINK FLOYD
SHELTER

RISING MOON
This early live presentation of *Dark Side* grew to include a 40-foot circular screen onstage for animation and video.

[redacted]

> **“IT CONVEYED AN ADULT KIND OF DISENCHANTMENT, BUT ALSO A CONCERN ABOUT THE STATE OF THE WORLD.”**

’70s—after the drug years, and this harsh, committed climate of the late ’60s—it had a wonderful sense of intelligence, and sensitivity. And it conveyed an adult kind of disenchantment, but also a concern about the state of the world.”

As a start, money was spent on *Dark Side*’s packaging. Menon funded a gatefold sleeve, which accommodated a second prism graphic on the back and Roger Waters’ idea of connecting it to the one on the front by running the color spectrum, with a heartbeat blip, through the fully opened cover. For the first time on a Floyd album, lyrics were included, as were two posters (band shots and Storm Thorgerson’s photo of the Great Pyramids taken in infrared under a full moon) and two pyramid stickers by George Hardie. There was an all-out ad campaign, and condensed versions of “Money” and “Us and Them” were readied for FM radio, which eagerly embraced them.

Ironically, the label’s launch party at the London Planetarium on Feb. 27, 1973, was a debacle that

[redacted]

“THERE’S A CERTAIN GRANDEUR HERE THAT EXCEEDS MERE MUSICAL MELODRAMATICS.”

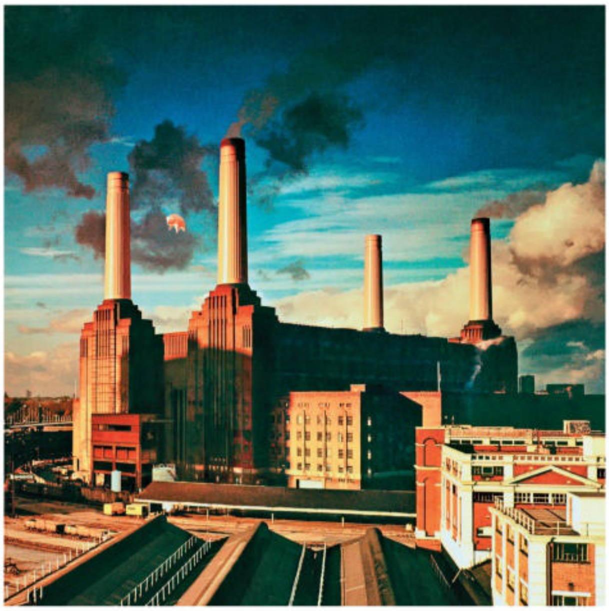
underwhelmed the invited media. Three of the four Floyds boycotted the event, mostly because they felt the sound system wasn’t up to snuff. Cardboard cutouts of Waters, Gilmour and Mason accompanied the living, breathing Rick Wright. It was just as well. According to Roy Hollingsworth of *Melody Maker*, the “confusing” music reduced listeners in the darkened room to “chattering” and using cigarette lighters and their hands to create shadow images of bunny heads and genitals on the wall.

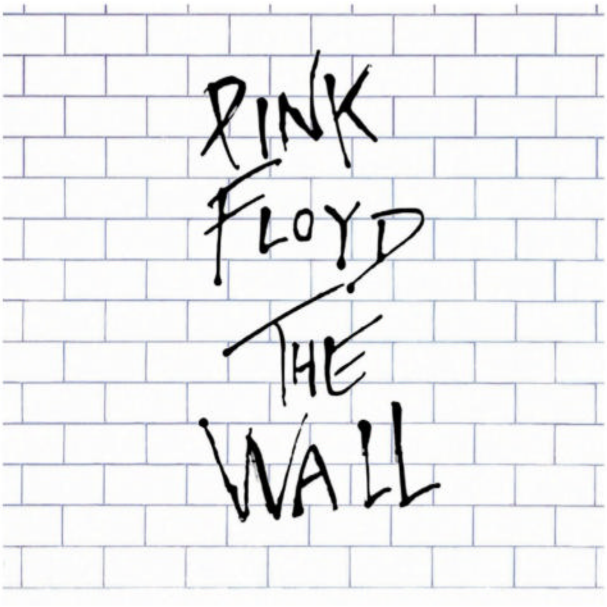
Most critics were more enthusiastic after they heard the album. *Billboard* called it “music for intense listening.” *New Musical Express* opined that it was “Floyd’s most successful artistic venture.” According to *Rolling Stone*, “there’s a certain grandeur here that exceeds mere musical melodramatics and is rarely attempted in rock” as well as “the true flash that comes from the excellence of a superb performance.” Even *Melody Maker* came around: “It took nine months to make at Abbey Road and it is worth every second of studio time.”

The vast majority of people agreed. One evening not long after *Dark Side*’s release, Clare Torry passed a record shop on London’s King’s Road. In the window was the new Floyd album with its distinctive cover. “I wonder if that’s what I did,” she thought. Going in and examining a copy, she saw her name in the credits, so she bought it and thought it was “really good.”

Released March 1, 1973, in the U.S., *Dark Side* later occupied the top spot for only one week in late April before being supplanted by Elvis Presley’s *Aloha From Hawaii via Satellite*. In the U.K., it sold 700,000 copies during its first week out, but oddly never reached No. 1 there as it did in Canada. Still, it ranked among the year’s biggest albums with Led Zeppelin’s *Houses of the Holy*, Elton John’s *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* and *Goats Head Soup* by the Rolling Stones. And unlike those others, it remained on the Billboard 200 albums chart until April 30, 1988, far surpassing the old record of 490 weeks held by Johnny Mathis’ *Johnny’s Greatest Hits*.

PINK CLASSICS
Wish You Were Here, Animals and *The Wall* came about because of—and despite—*Dark Side*'s phenomenal success.





On March 17, the day *Dark Side* entered the U.S. charts at No. 95, Pink Floyd was in the midst of an American tour and performed a now legendary midnight show at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. Rising up out of the stage at 1:30 a.m. playing "Obscured by Clouds," they did a bunch of older songs before taking a break. Their second set opened with the heartbeat. By all accounts, their rendition of *Dark Side* that night was flawless and unforgettable.

The word was out and the album was everywhere, insinuating itself and the band into the hearts and minds of listeners the world over. When Pink Floyd returned to the U.S. two months later they found themselves playing huge arenas and 70,000-seat stadiums, a development that fueled their ever-more elaborate live spectacles as well as their disenchantment with the rowdy new fans who came to see them.

As *Dark Side* sold steadily, Capitol insisted on trying to crack AM radio's top 40 with a single, a format Pink Floyd had abandoned ("in a fit of pique" according to Mason) after "Point Me at the Sky" failed to launch in 1968. Over the band's objection, a sanitized version of "Money" (with the word "bulls***" obscured) was released in May. It gave the Floyd their first top 20 hit, reaching No. 13 in the U.S. and turbocharging sales of the LP.

Dark Side's wings carried Pink Floyd to a rarified summit of rock. Now wealthy and free to do as they pleased, they confronted the daunting demand of equaling or exceeding perfection with a follow-up debut for a new record label. "The pressure to go out on the road because we had to, financially, is over," Wright told *Melody Maker* in 1978, "but the other pressure that came, since *Dark Side*, was probably even harder to cope with because it was a success. What does one do now?"

By the end of the year, Pink Floyd were back in the studio contemplating that question. As usual, they rummaged in their cupboard for unused material and embarked on an aborted attempt to create an album without using musical instruments, a concept they'd first tried in 1970. "If we like an idea we rarely

PINK FLOYD

WORD'S OUT
Nick Mason (with writer Steve Peacock) and the rest of the usually press-wary Pink Floyd were showered with publicity.

[redacted]

"*WISH YOU WERE HERE* CAME ABOUT BY US GOING ON IN SPITE OF THE FACT WE'D FINISHED."

give it up," Mason wrote in *Inside Out*, "and then only if it has been declared clinically dead."

The ensuing struggle yielded *Wish You Were Here* in September 1975. A melancholy tribute to Syd Barrett, lament about the death of the band's communal spirit, and jaded attack on the music business, it wasn't well received by critics but it still gave Pink Floyd their second No. 1 album and eventually assumed the status of a classic. *Animals* followed in 1977, then their biggest blockbuster, *The Wall*, in 1979. But *Dark Side* stands alone as a beginning and end for the band.

"I think it was when *Dark Side of the Moon* was so successful, it was the end," Waters told author Nick Sedgewick in 1975. "We'd reached the point we'd all been aiming for ever since we were teenagers and there was really nothing more to do in terms of rock 'n' roll ... those kinds of sales are every rock 'n' roll band's dream. *Wish You Were Here* came about by us going on in spite of the fact we'd finished."

[redacted]

CHAPTER 8

LONG YOU LIVE AND HIGH YOU FLY

DARK SIDE'S LASTING LEGACY

LASTING IMPACT “It still doesn’t sound dated; it still sounds good when I listen to it,” David Gilmour has said of *Dark Side*’s enduring appeal.

“THE IDEAS THAT ROGER WAS EXPLORING APPLY TO EVERY GENERATION,”

David Gilmour has said of *Dark Side’s* remarkably enduring appeal. “It still doesn’t sound dated; it still sounds good when I listen to it. But I can’t really say why it should achieve that longevity over some of the other great records which have been out.”

In the name of perspective, *The Dark Side of the Moon* remains a shining example of what Gilmour believes is the magic that can result when dark lyrics are laid upon a bed of uplifting music. Fifty years after its release, it consistently ranks near or at the top of fans’ and critics’ lists of greatest albums. Acclaimedmusic.net, which aggregates such ratings dating back to 1950, lists *Dark Side* at No. 21 among 3,000 entries. (For what it’s worth, *Pet Sounds* by the Beach Boys holds the top spot.)

Rankings are, of course, subjective, but *Dark Side* has had an impact usually reserved for great works of art. In 2013, it was added to the Library of Congress for its cultural and historical significance and “brilliant, innovative production in service of the music.” Its release is often listed among major historical events ocurring on March 1. It’s a staple of classic rock radio, a soundtrack to laser light shows at planetariums and museums. Artifacts

PINK FLOYD III
Gilmour, Mason and Wright reformed the band and toured from 1987-90 with Guy Pratt (center) replacing Waters on bass.

CLASSIC SHOWS
Pink Floyd's Division Bell world tour in 1994 featured *Dark Side* in its entirety at selected gigs.

from the making of the album are highly prized. The recording console sold at auction for $1.8 million in 2017. Two years later, Jim Irsay, owner of the Indianapolis Colts, paid $4 million for the black Stratocaster that Gilmour played on *Dark Side* and other Pink Floyd classics.

Dark Side even spawned a popular myth that it was intentionally recorded to sync up with the film *The Wizard of Oz*. “It’s absolute nonsense,” Nick Mason joked to MTV in 1997. “It has nothing to do with *The Wizard of Oz*. It was all based on *The Sound of Music*.”

Not least, *Dark Side* has inspired generations of musicians and bands, among them Radiohead, Tame Impala, Gov’t Mule and Phish. It has been covered by the Flaming Lips and interpreted by tribute acts such as Aussie Floyd and Brit Floyd. There’s even an a capella version by Voices On The Dark Side and a Vitamin String Quartet tribute.

“It’s the perfect record,” singer-guitarist Neil Fallon of Clutch told *Louder* magazine. “The lyrics match the music, and the music matches the lyrics. I remember listening to it also at a very young age, and that was one of the very first records I remember closing my eyes too. I still do to this day, which says something.”

Guitarist Warren Haynes of Gov’t Mule has said, “Lyrically, it’s amazing and the timelessness of the

[redacted]

music doesn't sound like it has a date stamped on it. You can hear it in any decade and it really holds up. But really, it's the uniqueness. Pink Floyd had that [special] sound that was unique to them. I love [David] Gilmour's guitar playing and his voice. It makes you feel different because there's a weight to it. It's not like listening to pop music."

Listening to *Dark Side* now, one easily grasps why it remains timeless. The line "*The lunatics are in my hall. The paper holds their folded faces to the floor and every day the paper boy brings more*" from "Brain Damage" still rings painfully true. Wars continue taking mankind to the brink, violence and political unrest grip much of the world, mental health problems are rampant, the wealth disparity between rich and poor continues to grow, and greed swallows a world the human race is destroying with its pollution.

But in its dire commentary, the album still conveys the common longing to live in harmony. "I feel that the vast majority of us will never embrace the harmony," Roger Waters told interviewer Jim Ladd in 1992. "It's all there for us to embrace, but we can't embrace it because we're buggered up."

Dark Side's enormous success secured Pink Floyd's place in music history, but also set off a protracted, notoriously bitter and very public breakup of the band. Personality and creative differences—between the brash Waters and the proud Gilmour as well as between Waters and the quiet Wright—festered after its release, destroying Pink Floyd's collaborative spirit and leading to Wright's exit in 1979. Waters left in 1985, insisting that the band was "a spent force creatively." That statement became the subject of endless passionate debate among fans and critics after Gilmour reformed Pink Floyd with Mason and Wright plus supporting musicians and writers and delivered two highly successful albums—*A Momentary Lapse of Reason* in 1987 and *The Division Bell* in '94—as well as world tours.

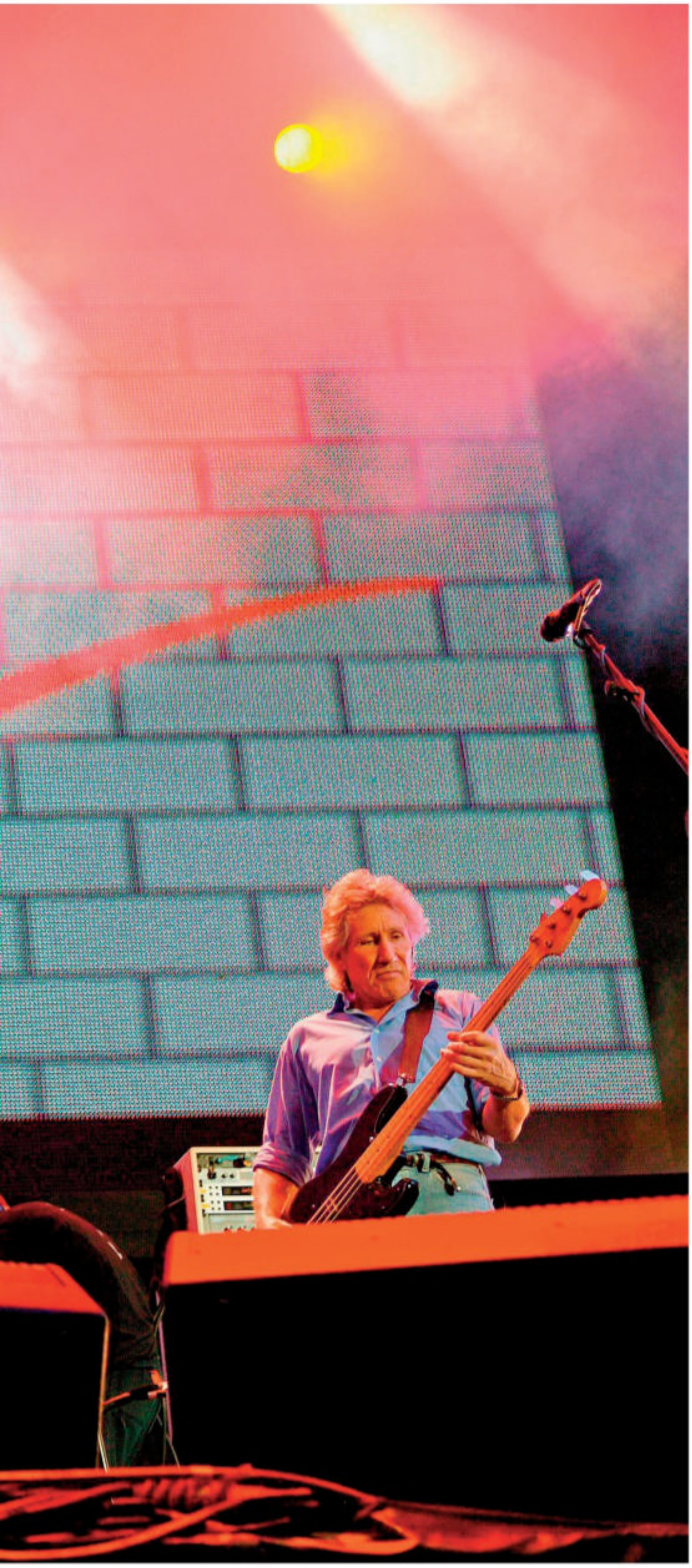
The Dark Side of the Moon is a watershed of Pink Floyd's sound that Gilmour, Wright and Mason sought to recreate after Waters' departure. Their performance of it on their 1994 tour is the highlight of their album *Pulse*. Waters also staged his own solo performances of *Dark Side* during his 2006-08 tour and titled his 2017-18 worldwide jaunt "Us + Them," which generally featured all but two of the album's songs.

After years of withering insults, the four members had a "when pigs fly" moment when they reunited

[redacted]

WHICH ONE'S PINK? As a solo artist, Roger Waters has claimed he was Pink Floyd's "creative genius" after Syd Barrett.

LIVE 8 REUNION
David Gilmour was very reluctant to do it, but a charitable cause helped achieve what seemed impossible: a reunion.



> **IF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE LISTENING TO *DARK SIDE* 50 YEARS FROM NOW, THE REASONS WILL STILL BE CLEAR.**

for Live 8, a debt relief concert to support developing nations in 2005. It was fitting that Pink Floyd's set opened with *Dark Side*'s heartbeat and that "Breathe" and "Money" were among the four songs they performed (the others being "Wish You Were Here" and "Comfortably Numb").

Dark Side's run of more than 950 weeks on the Billboard 200 albums chart is still well ahead of its closest pursuer, *Legend: The Best of Bob Marley and The Wailers*. Reissues such as the 20th anniversary mini-box (1993), 30th anniversary 5.1 surround sound remix (2003), 2011 Experience Edition, 2016 remaster and 50th anniversary deluxe box set—have fueled constant sales as fans desire updates, replacements for worn copies or simply discover the record's magic for the first time. Nielsen Music found it was the second-best selling vinyl album of the decade—in 2019.

Rock has long been eclipsed by rap and hip-hop as the world's most popular form of music, but many of its finest works will surely endure. If millions of people are listening to *The Dark Side of the Moon* 50 years from now, the reasons will still be clear. And it will hardly be a surprise.

PINK FLOYD

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IS PINK FLOYD AT THEIR BEST.